

**WASHINGTON, DC** –“ Congressman Joe Courtney today announced that the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association has secured \$790,280 in federal funding from the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA to enhance efforts to recruit and retain volunteer fire fighters across eastern Connecticut.

“Having a well-trained, reliable corps of volunteer firefighters who can safely and effectively respond to local emergencies is a key part of keeping our communities safe,” **said**

**Congressman Courtney**

. “This funding will help strengthen volunteer fire departments across the district by creating a favorable environment for current volunteers and encouraging new ones to join. Giving skilled, passionate public servants the resources they need to help protect the community is a smart and sensible goal.”

Awarded through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program, this competitive funding will be used to provide local volunteer fire departments with the tools and information they need to recruit and respond to local emergencies more effectively. Specifically, the grant will be used to publicize and inform potential candidates about volunteer opportunities as well as to implement proven recruiting methods for volunteer firefighters and EMS staff. The funding is expected to increase the number of certified volunteer firefighters who are trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response.

SAFER is part of the Department of Homeland Security’s larger Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. Rep. Courtney has consistently supported additional funding for AFG Program since his arrival in Congress. Since 2001, the AFG has provided approximately \$4.6 billion in grants to first-responder organizations to obtain much-needed emergency response equipment, personal protective equipment, firefighting and emergency vehicles, and training.